

U.S. Naval Air Station,
Plant Maintenance Shop (Building 38)
Pensacola
Escambia County
Florida

HABS No. FL-241

HABS
FLA,
17-PENSA,
74-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Architectural and Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. FL-241

U.S. NAVAL AIR STATION
PLANT MAINTENANCE SHOP

(BUILDING 38)

Location:

U.S. Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Escambia
County, Florida.

Present Owner:

Commanding Officer.

Present Use:

Shop.

Significance:

The building, with its label lintel motifs over the masonry openings, is a fine example of late 19th century military utilitarian architecture.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: The building was built on the old Pensacola Navy Yard in 1881.
2. Architect: The Plant Maintenance Shop is probably a modification of a design by one of the architects working for the U.S. Navy Department in Washington, D.C.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The Plant Maintenance Shop (Building 38) has been the property of the U.S. Navy during its entire history.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Construction of the building was done by craftsmen and laborers employed by the Navy under the supervision of the Civil Engineer.
5. Alterations and additions: No information is available on changes to the building prior to 1918. In that year the second floor was being used for aircraft engine repair and an elevator was installed on the south end of the building to raise the engines to that level. The next modification recorded was the change to steam heating which was accomplished in 1930.

Four additions to the building came in 1942. A shavings and chip collector exhaust system was put in with the collector located on the outside southeast corner of the building. An automatic sprinkler system was also installed as it was in most of the other buildings on the station in that year. In order to

provide a separate area for an apprentice school, the north third of the first floor was partitioned off from the rest of that floor. In addition, an inter-communications system was added on the first floor. Numerous minor changes have been made to the building since that date.

In 1947 a foundation was put in for the installation of a Bickford milling machine on the first floor. In 1950 a monorail was installed on the first floor which ran from the front to the rear of the building. Two years later, in 1952, a hoist and walkway replaced the elevator on the south end of the building. This permitted lumber and other heavy materials to be raised to the second floor.

In 1963 the building was reroofed and 28 skylights were covered over. This work was accomplished by the Standard Roofing Company of Knoxville, Tennessee, for \$34,289.28. Roof ventilators were later added. Although the exact date is unknown, sometime in the 1960s the first floor was resurfaced.

Work in the late 1960s and early 1970s included installation of: air dryers for the paint and fabric shops in 1967, a dropped ceiling in the office and conference room areas on the first floor in 1968, a foundation for the platform lift on the south end of the building in 1968 and the platform lift itself in 1969, new fluorescent lighting on the second floor in 1969, a foundation for a plate shear machine on the first floor in 1971 and a monorail on the first floor for the welding shop in 1972.

In 1970 the building had a general cleaning by the Hiras Contracting Company of Birmingham, Alabama for approximately \$22,000. Bricks were repaired and pointed, glass and glazing replaced where needed, paint and caulking applied and other repairs made as required. The next year, 1971, Dixie Materials, Inc. repaired the ramps.

Except for the changes made to the roof through the elimination of the skylights and the installation of the air ventilators, the alterations and additions to the building have done little to change its outward appearance. The work has been primarily in the interior and has been concerned with the installation of new heavy machinery, convenience and easy movement of heavy equipment and supplies, and the general maintenance and safety of the building.

B. Historical Context:

The present site of the Plant Maintenance Shop was occupied by other buildings prior to the Civil War. As early as 1829, a building located approximately on that spot was used as a blacksmith shop and armory. By 1844, a new building had been erected there and until the

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war was referred to as a timber shed with a joiner shop above. Thus, the history of the second floor of the building on that location as a joiner's (ship carpenter's) shop long pre-dates Building 38. Building 20, as it was referred to prior to the war, was destroyed along with almost all of the other buildings on the Navy Yard by the retreating Confederates as they evacuated the yard in the spring of 1862.

While the plans were being made for the rebuilding of the Navy Yard in 1867, it was recommended that a spar shed and joiner shop, to be called Building 38, be constructed on the site. This recommendation was repeated periodically until 1880, when an act of Congress provided \$150,000, for putting the Navy Yard in a state of efficiency. Construction of the building was soon underway. The following year, 1881, the work was accomplished at a cost of \$29,374.27 for materials and \$29,106.76 for labor. A change in number and title had been made in 1886, when it was recorded as Building 44, mould loft and workshop, but it lasted only a short time. In 1901, the building was re-designated as a machine shop, and while still called a machine shop in 1901, it was re-numbered Building 30. Following the reopening of the yard as the Naval Air Station in 1914, the building was referred to as a machine shop and re-numbered Building 38. In recent years it has been called the Plant Maintenance Shop.

During the World War I and for some years afterwards the first floor was utilized primarily as a machine shop. The second floor was used for the repair of aircraft engines. The three principal shops on the second floor were a propeller shop, motor erecting shop and instrument shop. Although the date is unknown, prior to World War II the second floor was made into a joiner shop.

Today the building is a part of the Production Engineering Department of the Naval Air Rework Facility. The first floor contains the welding and machine shops, offices and conference room, and safety shoe store. The second floor houses the tool room, carpenter shop and saw filing room.

Prepared by: William S. Coker
Historian
Historic American Buildings
Survey
Summer 1972

PART II ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: Built in 1881, Building 38 with label lintel motifs over the masonry openings, is a fine example of late 19th century utilitarian architecture.
2. Condition of fabric: The structure is well-maintained and is in excellent condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The building, rectangular in plan, is 60' (three-bays) x 250'-0" (15 bays) and is two-stories high.
2. Foundations: The foundations are inaccessible.
3. Walls: The walls are common bond brick, painted a light cream color with the header course every sixth course. Wall thickness is 18". Pilasters in each bay, 28" wide and 5" thick extend the wall thickness to 23" to support the cross beams.
4. Structural system, framing: The exterior walls are brick bearing walls supporting the second floor $4\frac{1}{2}$ " x 12" joists approximately 16" on center. The roof trusses are constructed from 10" x 12" members and cross chords. $1\frac{1}{4}$ " outside diameter vertical steel tie rods are introduced into each truss. The trusses carry 7" x 9" purlins, which carry the 3" x $4\frac{1}{4}$ " roof rafters 24" on center. The roof sheathing consists of $5\frac{1}{4}$ " tongue-and-groove boards. On the first floor, two rows of chamfered columns, 13" x 13", run longitudinally the length of the building 16' -6" on center and carry 10" x 15" cross beams that support the floor joists on the second floor.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: A modern double sliding door on overhead tracks exists on the single 9' wide opening on the north (front) facade. On the first floor on the east and west facades every other bay contains an original pair of sliding wood doors on an overhead wood track. Each door contains 24 lights over two molded panels, locked with a heavy latch hook. Typical glazing is 9" x 13" with two ten-light transoms that follow the curvature of the round granite arch overhead.

An 8' wide opening at the south (rear) end of the building on the second floor provides access to the outside electric hoist. It is constructed with 5" beaded board over a framework of 2" x 7/2" supports.

- b. Windows: Typically, the first floor double windows with joined granite arches, have nine-over-nine double hung wooden sash, with the glazing being 12" x 18 1/2", and the top lights have the same shape as the arch. The sills are smooth granite with a splash ledge. Typical windows on the second floor are six-over-six double hung wood sash, also with joined granite arches and granite sills.

6. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The hip roof, once with 13 five-light skylights on each long side of the roof and one on each end, now has the skylights removed and is covered with asphalt shingles.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Beneath the narrow eaves with an attached gutter and continuous around the building is a brick architrave band, the lower portion defined by a single course corbel and the upper portion defined by a single course corbel supporting a double course corbel.
- c. Vents: Four roof vents exist along the ridge line of the structure.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First floor: The first floor, with the exception of two small offices built into the northwest corner, is basically one large open space utilized for maintenance machinery by the Naval Air Rework Facility.
- b. Second floor: The north four bays on the second floor are utilized as a storeroom and space used as a carpentry shop. A small wooden enclosure on the west side of the building near the north stairway from the first floor houses restrooms. Another enclosure in the southeast corner, with storage space above, is used as office space.

- 2. Stairways: Two stairways, one in the northwest corner and the other in the southeast corner, carry to the second floor. Both are 4' wide with an 11 1/2" tread and 8" riser. A 3 1/2" handrail is carried on the 3 1/2" board enclosure.

3. Flooring: The flooring on the first floor is concrete, while the second floor has a masonite covering.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Exposed brick bearing walls are evident on both floors. The ceiling on the first floor is the exposed joists of the second floor. The second floor ceiling is the exposed roof truss system.
5. Doorways and doors: Interior doors are modern.
6. Hardware: Original door closing hardware exists on all first floor doors.

A modern electric hoist to the second floor exists on the south end of the building along with a metal dust collector and chip bin, painted brown.

7. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating: Cast-iron steam radiators are supplied by the central heating plant.
 - b. Lighting: The lighting is modern fluorescent.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The long axis of the structure is oriented east and west with the main entrance on the north facade which faces on South Avenue. To the west additional maintenance buildings exist while south of the building is a storage shed that sits on the quay wall on Pensacola Bay. East of the structure is a long narrow frame building which sits on the edge of the Wet Basin (HABS No. FL-240).
2. Outbuilding: A small brick outbuilding facing the west side of the main building is utilized as engine room. A photo of this building is included in the HABS collection.

Prepared by: John A. Sanderson
Project Historian
Historic American Buildings Survey
Summer 1972

PART III SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings and other records:

Measured drawings, floor plans and index cards indicating architectural, mechanical, electrical and general work on the Plant Maintenance Shop, in Engineering Department, Public Works Center, NAS, Pensacola, Florida. Records are basically World War I to the present.

Measured drawings, floor plans, Navy Yard maps in Bureau of Yards and Docks Plan Files, Navy Department, on microfilm, copy in Old Military Records Branch, National Archives, Washington, D.C. Index (16mm.) see last part of Reel 13 and first part of Reel 14. Drawings, etc. of Pensacola Navy yard are numbered 800-1-1 to 800-45-407, Reels 641 through 648.5 (35mm.). Records date from about 1829 to end of World War II.

A copy of a drawing of the building is available in the HABS field records.

B. Early Views:

There are six old views of Building 38 in the photographic file of the Naval Aviation Museum, NAS Pensacola, Florida (1) 1916 aerial view of the Naval Air Station and a distant profile of the Building, negative #000519; (2) view showing only the north end (1/4) of the building dated March 1917. It provides a good view of the door and window openings with the label lintel motifs, negative #010135; (3) aerial view dated 4 May 1918 with Building 38 in its World War I camouflage suit and prior to installation of elevator on south end, negative #000677; (4) view showing southeast corner of the building taken 23 August 1918, negative #003293; (5) distant aerial view of 15 July 1919, but first picture of elevator on south end, negative #010065; and (6) view of east side of building showing the elevator on the south end in 1933, negative #010026.

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources: Building Property Records, Plant Account Office, Public Works Center, NAS, Pensacola, Florida.
2. Secondary and published sources: U.S. Navy Annual Reports of the Navy Department. Washington, D.C. 1880-

Young, Lucien. United States Navy Yard and Station. Copy in NAS Library, Pensacola, Florida. Written in 1910 and published in 1964.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) under joint sponsorship of the National Park Service, The American Revolution Bicentennial Commission of Florida, and the Historic Pensacola Preservation Board. Measured and drawn during the summer of 1972 under the direction of John Poppeliers, chief of HABS, by: Rodd L. Wheaton (Architect, HABS), June Project Supervisor; John A. Sanderson (University of Florida), July-August Project Supervisor; Dr. William S. Coker (University of West Florida), Historian; John M. Szubski (Princeton University), Architect; and by Student Assistant Architects: J. Tucker Bishop (University of Texas, Austin); John C. Hecker (University of Illinois, Urbana) and Scott A. Kinzy (University of Nebraska) at the United States Air Station, Pensacola, Florida. Susan McCown, a HABS staff historian in the Washington, D.C. office, edited the written descriptive and architectural data in the fall of 1980. Jack Boucher, a HABS staff photographer, took the documentary photographs in March of 1974.